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SERMON CCXXXVIII.

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THE GOODNESS OF GOD FITTED TO LEAD MEN TO
REPENTANCE.

ROMANS, ii. 4. *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

THE same fire that softens wax, hardens clay; the same sun, that warms and fertilizes the earth and clothes its fields with verdure, exhales from its marshes and fens the noxious vapors, which poison the air and produce contagion, disease, and death. In like manner, the same goodness of God that wakens to ecstasy the joys of heaven, and fills every heart, around the throne, with love and praise, hardens the impenitent in their sins, and forms them vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. These different effects are not owing to any difference in the nature of the cause which produces them, but to the nature of the subjects on which that cause operates. The element of heat is simple; and the rays of the sun, though diversified, are so harmoniously blended, that they always produce, in any given case, precisely the same effects. So the goodness of God, simple in its nature and uniform in all its operations, tends directly, in its natural, unperverted influence on moral agents, to conform them to the divine image and to make them holy and happy. This is its design, this its natural tendency. But by perversion and abuse, this same goodness may be made to produce effects entirely the opposite of these. It may stupify, and harden, and destroy the very persons, whom, if its proper design and tendency had not been resisted, it would have led to repentance, and prepared for heaven.

The text is a solemn expostulation addressed to those who are guilty of thus perverting the goodness of God. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

The object of the present discourse is to show, that the goodness of God is fitted and intended to lead sinners to repentance. Let it be observed then—
1. There is much, in the very nature of divine goodness, which is fitted to produce this effect. It lays all intelligent creatures under everlasting obligations to God, the great Author of their being, and of their mercies. It shows

also, in a very strong light, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, as an offence against the greatest and best of beings, our Father and our God ; and while, in its long suffering and forbearance, it gives assurance of his readiness to pardon all the penitent, it appeals in the most direct and powerful manner to all the faculties and feelings of the soul. The language of divine goodness to every sinner, is,—What provocation hast thou, that thou shouldst cast off the service of thy God, and refuse to hearken to his voice of love and salvation ? Is he not thy Father, the Author of thy being, and the giver of thy blessings ? Is it not he that has kept thee alive till this hour ; that has fed and clothed and blessed thee ever since thou hast had a being, and is even now, after all thy ingratitude, waiting to welcome thy return to his love, and to make thee partaker of the eternal joys of his kingdom ? Why dost thou then yet sin against thy God, and turn a deaf ear to his calls of mercy ? Has he been a wilderness unto thee ; a land of darkness ; a hard master ? Look abroad upon the works of this all-wise and benevolent God, and see how all things proclaim his goodness and show forth his glory, and unite in calling thee to duty and heaven : and hast thou a heart to resist the claims of his infinite love, and still go on in thy sins ? The whole creation, beaming forth the brightness of his perfections and the glories of his name, is one constant admonition to the impenitent of their *unreasonableness* and guilt. Thou canst look no where, without meeting demonstrations of the loving kindness and tender mercy of God ; and every fresh manifestation of love is a new argument to enforce the duty of immediate and entire submission to his will.

In this manner does the goodness of God make its appeal to the heart, and urge us, one and all, to repent and live. It appeals to our reason, and the verdict is, that to sin against such a Being is a deep debasement of our nature, and a most guilty perversion of the noble faculties with which he has endued us. It appeals to our sense of duty ; and the verdict is, that no obligation is so strong as that which binds us to Jehovah, our God, and no guilt so great, as that of violating such obligation, and refusing to repent. It appeals to our gratitude, and the verdict is, that to slight such goodness, as God is daily manifesting, indicates a heart dead to every generous emotion. It appeals to our hopes and fears ; and the verdict is, that no good can be secured so great, as that which flows from repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ ; and no evil incurred so tremendous, as that which must result from continued impenitence and rejection of offered mercy. These appeals, addressed by infinite goodness to all the sensibilities of the heart, constitute a motive to repentance the most powerful of which we can form any conception.

No appeal, we are sensible, can be made to a disobedient child so tender and moving as that which springs from the kindness of a parent's heart. Go to such a child and tell him, there is no just cause for the ill temper he is indulging ; tell him that the parent against whom he is rebelling feels towards him only the spirit of kindness and love, and is even now longing to welcome back to his bosom this one of his family, who has done so much to alienate his affections ; and if the appeal does not reach the heart, and cause him to return to duty, you feel at once that no motives can reach his case. He is hardened beyond the power of persuasion. But what is the goodness of the kindest

earthly parent, compared with the goodness of Him who is the Father of us all? His very nature is love, is goodness; and that goodness, in all its riches and forbearance and long suffering, is incessantly poured upon the heart of rebellious man to lead him to repentance.

There is too a peculiarity in the *mode* in which divine goodness flows to guilty man, which adds inexpressibly to its tender and persuasive energy. It is not goodness flowing to innocent beings through the unobstructed channels of benevolence; but goodness, flowing to lost sinners through the mediation of the Son of God; it is goodness purchased with blood; goodness pressing its suit and pleading for the life of your souls, by the love of the eternal Father, by the compassion of a bleeding Savior, by the deep sorrows of the garden, and the deeper agonies of the cross. Here is goodness such as was never manifested in any world but ours, nor towards any other beings but the lost children of men. No wonder that angels desire to look into this new discovery of the divine benevolence; no wonder that they rejoice to witness its triumphs in the salvation of repenting sinners; the only wonder is that all on earth are not melted and subdued by it, and brought to adore and love that goodness which moved God to give his Son to die for our lost world.

2. The goodness of God is fitted to lead sinners to repentance, as it secures for them a respite from punishment and gives them a space for repentance. This is expressly assigned in the Bible as the reason why God spares sinners in this world of mercy, and follows them with his calls of love. He waits to be gracious, is long suffering towards them, because he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Why else does God prolong the lives of those who daily trample on his authority and despise his goodness? He is able to punish them, and they deserve to be punished. If every sinner were immediately to be cut off from hope, and have executed upon him the penalty of the violated law, God would be just, and a holy universe would approve his conduct. And yet he bears long with the ungrateful despisers of his grace; year after year, he keeps back the stroke of justice, lengthens out their probation and follows them still with the offers of pardon—all the fruit of unmerited goodness, and all to give them a space for repentance. And what motive to repentance more persuasive than this forbearance of a long suffering and gracious God towards those who requite him only evil for good? It shows not only that he is willing, but earnestly desirous that the sinner should turn and live. Every hour and minute is a fresh respite from deserved punishment, and a fresh call to repentance and salvation. Every evening and morning, as you lie down and rise up, as you go out and come in, the divine goodness meets you with a renewed reprieve from your Sovereign and with renewed offers of pardon and eternal life. Every Sabbath, as its sacred light dawns, invites you to the sanctuary, repeats the calls to repentance, and enforces those calls by assurances that God is still waiting to be gracious, and ready to pardon and save all who turn unto him.

3. The goodness of God leads to repentance, as it has opened a way in which repentance is available to secure pardon and life for the chief of sinners. If the Lord Jesus Christ had not interposed in our behalf, and by his sufferings and death in our stead, opened a way whereby God can be just and yet justify him that believeth in Jesus, the unwelcome call to repentance had

never fallen upon the ear of reluctant sinners, but every rebel had been left to perpetual impenitence and to its endless punishment. But now, in Christ Jesus, God is reconciling the world unto himself. In his eternal and infinite goodness, he so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life. On the broad ground of an atonement, thus made for the sins of the world, all are invited to come unto God; and though burdened with guilt deep as that of Manasseh or Saul of Tarsus, they have assurance, that, coming penitent and believing, they shall obtain mercy and everlasting salvation. The condition of pardon now is, not that you present a perfect righteousness, of your own, not that you work out an atonement for your sins, or merit forgiveness by doings of your own, but that you repent and look unto God for mercy through Jesus Christ. And what motive to repentance stronger than this? The doors of your prison house are thrown open, every obstacle to your coming forth is taken out of the way, and God in mercy meets you with his calls of love and bids you welcome, on condition of repentance, to all the privileges and hopes of his children. No past sins form any barrier in the way of your access to God. His goodness, manifested in the gift of his Son, has broken down every wall of separation, and bids you, however poor, helpless, and guilty, to come boldly to the throne, that you may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. It is, as if divine goodness, taking you by the hand and leading you aside, should say,—Come now and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Behold the door of mercy set open before you, and God waiting to hear the first sigh of repentance, that he may pour into your bosom the joys of his salvation. No depth of guilt need exclude you from his favor. With him is plenteous redemption. It is only to look and live. O, admire the patience, adore the love, and accept the mercy of your long suffering God. Arise and go to your Father; and while yet afar off, he will meet you with his love and restore you to all the privileges of his blessed family. I add,

4. That the goodness of God is fitted to lead sinners to repentance, as it furnishes the best possible means of repentance and the most powerful motives to this duty. Some of these have already been mentioned; but they demand, in this place, a more distinct consideration. What but a means of bringing you to repentance is that direct and solemn appeal which the goodness of God is constantly making to all the sensibilities and faculties of the soul? What but a means of repentance is that forbearance and long suffering of God which holds back the stroke of justice and prolongs your existence in this world of hope and salvation? And what but a means to the same end is that love of God which gave his Son to die for you, and now extends to you the offer of a free and full pardon, on the one condition that you confess your transgressions and be sorry for your sins?

But let us notice some other means and motives which God in his goodness has furnished for the same great end.

Consider then the ample and impressive instruction poured around you from the word, the providence and the works of God. All these conspire to impress on your mind the same lessons of eternal wisdom and love. They

unfold to your view the perfections and ways of the great Eternal ; they make you acquainted with his law and gospel, with your own character, and state and prospects as sinners, and with the terms on which alone you can obtain the pardoning mercy of God. The books of creation, of providence and revelation lie spread out before you, inscribed by the hand-writing of Heaven, and designed to guide you to immortal life. Each illustrates and confirms the other, and all unite in pressing upon you the duty of making the eternal God your friend and of seeking for yourself the endless happiness of his kingdom.

Notice next the invitations of divine goodness. These meet the eye on almost every page of the inspired word ; and coming as they do from the lips of eternal love, it would seem as if they must avail to melt every heart that is not a heart of stone. Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth. Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

To give the more effect to these calls of heavenly mercy, the Bible abounds with the most alarming warnings to those who go on still in their trespasses. If I whet my glittering sword and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies and will reward them that hate me. He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy. Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded it ; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh.

Turn next to the promises which divine goodness has made to those that repent—promises of pardon, of grace and eternal glory—pardon for the deepest guilt ; grace to sanctify, to sustain, to comfort and bless with all needed good, in this life and forever ; eternal glory, too, in the presence of God and the Lamb ; joys which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, the sure inheritance of all that repent and turn unto the Lord. Nor does the goodness of God stop here. It lifts the covering from the pit of wo, and shows you the awful punishments prepared for them who make light of proffered mercy. It is divine goodness, I say, which makes this discovery and warns you of the coming wrath. The voice of warning may perhaps fall an unwelcome sound on the ear, but it is the voice of compassion, telling you of danger and urging your flight. The most awful threatenings of the Bible bespeak the goodness of God, not less really than his kindest promises. The object in both cases is the same ; to bring you to obedience and secure your salvation. "God waves the rod, because he is unwilling to strike." The wrath denounced is wrath to come. It lingers long, and signals of its approach are held out that you may take the alarm and flee to the ark of safety. It is mercy that now speaks to you of hell ; it is justice that will hereafter inflict its dreadful torments on those whom mercy could not reclaim from the ways of sin and death. The warnings of hell are to turn you back from the path that leads thither ; you are bidden to look to its dark regions and formidable fires, that you go not yourself to that place of torment.

Such then being the design and tendency of the goodness of God, let us inquire, in conclusion, what are its actual effects.

(1.) All the true friends of God feel the constraining power of his goodness ; and by it, are made penitent, believing and thankful. When they reflect upon the manifestations of divine goodness towards them and a lost world ; how patiently God has borne with them amid their provocations and sins ; how he gave his Son to die for them, and has called them from being heirs of death to be heirs of glory ; they are humbled in the dust in view of the great mercy bestowed on such miserable sinners ; and with heartfelt gratitude to the Author of all good, they exclaim with the Psalmist,—What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits ? This, my brethren, is the feeling of your hearts, if you have indeed tasted that the Lord is good and gracious. It is a feeling of mingled penitence and love ; of humility and gratitude ; and the effect is to draw you near to God in holy affection and to bind you forever to his throne and service. Cultivate and strengthen that feeling, my brethren ; it is a feeling naturally inspired by the goodness of God, and well becoming sinners redeemed from death and hell by his grace, and made heirs of immortal life. And remember, if divine goodness has already done so much for you, it will do more ; if it has begun to save, it will carry on the work unto perfection ; and if you have begun to feel the melting and subduing power of that goodness here, you will feel more hereafter, and finally praise God forever for his redeeming love and sanctifying grace.

(2.) There is another class of persons whom the goodness of God appears to leave wholly unaffected and unmoved. Of this class I fear there are not a few among ourselves. What impression, let me ask, has the goodness of God made on the minds of some of my hearers ? To say that it has not led them to repentance is to say only what they confess to be true, and what indeed is apparent to all. Has it even attracted their attention or drawn from them any direct, grateful recognition of the hand that has sustained and blessed them all their days ? God, my friends, has been doing you good ever since you have been in the world ; he watched over your helpless infancy, protected your youth, and crowned your ripper years with innumerable blessings ; his mercies have been new to you every morning and fresh every evening ; great has been his goodness towards you. What returns now have you made to him your great Creator and Benefactor ? Have you felt your ever growing obligations ; have you traced your enjoyments to his munificent hand ; realized your blessings to be so many calls to repentance ; and by them have you been made humble, thankful, obedient ? If some of you can answer in the affirmative, must not others of you confess here before God, that on you lies the sin of having despised the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering ? Has not that goodness fallen upon your heart as rain upon a rock, without impression and without fruit ? Look back to the past week, and consider how you began and closed each one of its days ;—you rose in the morning without thinking of God your preserver ; you went about the business of the day without any practical sense of his presence ; and you laid down at night without any thankful recognition of the goodness that had watched about your path, preserved you in your going out and coming in, and caused your cup to overflow with blessings. So you spent the last week ; every day found and left you unthankful,—casting off fear and restraining prayer before God ; and is not this a fair specimen of the manner in which you have spent

the whole of past life? Has not each day and month and year, as it has come to you loaded with God's goodness, found and left you impenitent and prayerless? never seriously thinking of the great design of God in his long suffering and kindness towards you; scarcely admitting perhaps that you are a sinner, and never coming before your Maker and Judge humbly confessing your sin and seeking his pardoning mercy. Sustained and blessed every hour and moment of your being, by the care and kindness of a God, always waiting to be gracious, always calling you to repentance, always proffering you the treasures of his grace and the joys of his kingdom,—and all this without any grateful sense, on your part, of the mercies you are receiving, and without any influence to melt you into contrition, or bring you, penitent and thankful, to acknowledge God as the Author of your being and of your mercies. O hard, insensible heart! unaffected, unmoved by all the riches of God's goodness; what can melt and subdue thee?—proof against all the riches of heavenly mercy.

(3.) There is another class who take encouragement from the goodness of God to sin against him even with a bolder and more unrelenting hand. This is emphatically to despise the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering, and it involves the deepest guilt of which man is capable. God spares the guilty that they may have a space for repentance, and they employ the respite given them to multiply their provocations and heap new insults upon the divine Majesty. Because God is slow to punish, they conclude he never will punish. Because he waits to be gracious, they turn his patience into an occasion of sin. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Are none of my hearers chargeable with this abuse of divine goodness? Why is it, let me ask, that you defer from day to day and from year to year the great work of repentance? Is it not because you presume the goodness and forbearance and long suffering of God will yet be continued towards you? God, you say, is a merciful God; he is long suffering and abundant in goodness; full of mercies and loving kindnesses, and has no pleasure in the death of sinners. True; his mercy is boundless; great beyond what eye hath seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived. It has provided salvation for a lost world; it has followed you with the offer of it all your days; and is waiting now, in much patience and kindness, that you turn and live. What then? Why, I will abuse that mercy; I will weary that long suffering; I will despise that goodness which I am experiencing from the hand of my God, and go on to sin against him my Creator, Redeemer, Benefactor and Friend. Does such a purpose, expressed in words shock your feelings? But is expressing a purpose in words worse than cherishing it in the heart and acting it out in the life? Go, impenitent, prayerless man, as you retire from the sanctuary, go alone into your chamber, and there before God express in language the feelings of your heart, and the conduct of your life. Lord, thou art good, and compassionate and long suffering; and therefore I am encouraged to cast off fear and restrain prayer before thee. Thou waitest with much patience and forbearance that sinners may turn and live; I will therefore go on in my sins, delay still the work of repentance, and cast from me thy fear and service. Thou hast hitherto followed me with thy loving

kindness and tender mercy ; I will therefore live, in time to come as in time past, neglecting the duties thou requirest of me, and seeking only my own selfish interests. You tremble and turn pale at the thought of uttering, with your lips, such language before God. But what else is the language of the heart and life of every impenitent sinner ; who, because God is good and does not come forth to execute punishment speedily, delays repentance and presumes to go on still in his trespasses ? Dear hearer, look at this case, and see whether it is not yours. Is it not presumption on the goodness of God, that makes you so inattentive to his calls ; so secure in your sins, so ready to put off repentance to a future period ? It must be added,

(4.) That those who continue to abuse the riches of God's goodness will finally perish with an aggravated condemnation. This, we at once perceive, is just ; and the Scriptures make it certain. Great as the patience of God is, a time is coming when it will give place to wrath. And this wrath will be the more terrible for the rich mercy that preceded it. When patience has performed her appointed work, she will retire from the scene and justice will ascend the throne and triumph in the destruction of those who would not yield to mercy. Sinners who despise and abuse the riches of divine goodness, will soon have passed the appointed limit of forbearance ; and then the treasures of wrath which they were laying up for themselves, while in the state of merciful probation, will kindle into unquenchable fire, and consume them with everlasting destruction. Mark the connection of the text.—Despise thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering ; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance ; but after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God ? There is then a treasury of wrath, for despisers of divine goodness ; and day by day, and hour by hour, impenitent men, you are casting into it. When will your cup be full ? When will you have reached the utmost limit of divine forbearance ? Who shall say whether you are not now treading that limit, and that, deferring repentance beyond this hour, you shall not be cut down in your sins and your doom sealed forever ? It is indeed a high privilege to live in the midst of the goodness which distinguishes your lot. But there is a responsibility connected with it which may well make you tremble. It will be dreadful to perish in any case ; but most dreadful of all to perish amid light and privilege ; amid the displays of divine goodness and the means and mercies which were fitted and designed to bring to repentance and salvation. Others hear the voice of God and turn to him and live. Let his goodness lead you also to repentance ; let his patience and long suffering draw you to his throne, in penitence and faith, and bind you forever to his service and kingdom. This is right, is good, is happy. But the opposite of it is sin, is misery, is everlasting death. You cannot neglect or despise the goodness of God, but with infinite guilt. If it does not bring you to repentance, it will harden you in impenitence ; if it does not bring you to God and prepare you for heaven, it must exclude you from God and fit you for an awful condemnation.

SERMON CCXXXIX.

BY REV. AUSTIN DICKINSON, NEW-YORK.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT:

OR

FINAL APPEAL TO THE IMPENITENT.

Psalm i. 5, *The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment.*

WHEN an important case is about to be decided in a court of justice, it is deemed no mark of enthusiasm to appear specially interested. If the case involve the life of a valued friend, or if even a very large amount of property is depending, it is natural, it is reasonable, to inquire how the trial is likely to terminate. And it would indicate madness, or at least very gross insensibility, if the individual whose life, or all whose property was at stake, should be entirely thoughtless in regard to his trial. If then God has appointed a great day of decision—a day for settling the destinies of every individual in bliss or wo, according to his character—how solemnly interesting must that day be; and how reasonable, how suitable, that we inquire now, whether we are prepared to stand the trial.

The Judge himself has assured us, that "*the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment:*" and among the ungodly he includes all who remain unconciled through the blood of the Lamb. If then you have sinned and remain impenitent, the warning is to you: you can not stand the last trial, but must meet a dreadful overthrow. To the candid mind, this certainty of the sinner's overthrow is now capable of perfect demonstration.

1. None will deny that THE LAW OF GOD, which is holy, just and good, explicitly condemns the sinner, and consigns him to the second death. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." "He that offends in one point, is guilty of all." And "not one jot or tittle shall pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." By the law, therefore, no sinner can be justified. And it contains no provision for pardon. On this ground, then, the sinner can never stand in the judgment.

2. He will not be able to stand the last trial, because ALL THE WITNESSES WILL BE AGAINST HIM.

His companions in sin will testify against him. Sinners, in this world, not unfrequently encourage one another in transgression; and if one is arrested, and brought to trial, his fellows in transgression sometimes swear falsely to save him from condemnation. But at the tribunal of God, every mouth that would justify sin will be stopped. The false swearer, the liar, will feel it utterly impossible to evade Omniscience. Thus every sinner will feel constrained to bear witness to the truth, even though it operate to condemn his nearest companions. Thus every wicked plot, every abomination in which they may have encouraged one another, will be openly exposed to their "*shame and everlasting contempt.*"

Again, the examples of the righteous will testify against the impenitent.

It will be in vain for sinners there to plead, as they sometimes do here, that they could not help continuing in sin; that they were urged on by a fatal necessity; that they were urged on by the violence of natural inclination. For the examples of the righteous will testify, that others, who were once of like dispositions and in like circumstances, have repented, have broken off their iniquities by turning unto the Lord. At the tribunal of Heaven, the example and condition of the righteous will testify, that *they* only were wise, and that all the impenitent were *fools*. That "*madness was in their heart while they lived.*" And the example of the wise, instead of provoking a smile of pity or contempt, will only pour eternal shame on all the finally impenitent.

Again, the sinner's own *awakened conscience and memory* will testify against him in that day. Conscience may now slumber in perfect insensibility. The sinner may put far away the evil day, and impiously say, "Where is the promise of his coming? What profit shall we have if we pray unto him?" But far different will be his reflections on *another* day. For when the slumbers of death are broken, and the terrors of the last judgment burst upon the view—then too will the slumbers of conscience be effectually broken, and a long chain of condemning recollections rush on the mind. Then will it be recollected, how, in early life, or riper years, the affecting sounds of death, judgment and eternity did ring on the ear, thrill the soul, agitate the heart, and almost persuade you to be a Christian. But conscience will then testify, how you slighted the monition, resisted the truth, and grieved the Holy Spirit. Memory too will on that day be amazingly quickened. Then every act or thought of injustice to man, or dishonor to God—all the millions of your now forgotten sins, of thought, word and deed, will come up in terrible array before you. Oh, what an immense, dark, thick cloud, to break at once in thunder on the conscience! And will not conscience be roused to fury, and declare you verily guilty, when God shall thus "bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing?" But,

Again, the *sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ* will testify against the wicked at the day of judgment. That same Jesus who hung on the cross, will then fill the throne. But, O how changed! That countenance, once marred, now glorious as ten thousand suns shining in their strength. His appearance will then say with emphasis, to such as now slight his offered grace, *These arms were once extended for your salvation—for sinners like you, this head was crowned with thorns—this body and soul bore the tremendous weight of a world's redemption.* And this exhibition will be as vivid lightning to the sinner's eye. It will furnish overwhelming proof of his ingratitude and guilt, whom such love could not melt.

All the *instructions of Christ* will also testify against the sinner in the last judgment. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; *the word that I have spoken*, the same shall judge him in the last day." Yes, these glorious truths of the Savior will be as noon-day splendors, to render the ingratitude and wickedness of the wicked the more manifest—their perseverance in sin perfectly inexcusable—and their damnation just.

And now, with such overwhelming variety of evidence against the sinner, and no witness whatever in his behalf, how manifest the certainty that he can

not stand the dread trial! But this certainty is still more manifest, if possible, from several other considerations.

3. Consider then next, THE ETERNAL JUDGE WILL BE INFLEXIBLY STRICT IN INTERPRETING AND UPHOLDING THE LAW. The omniscient Judge understands those laws which Himself has made. And he can not but have an unchanging veneration for them in all their strictness and purity; for he is the unchanging God. And from his book of remembrance, he can compare distinctly the life and heart of every man with what is written in the book of his statutes. And when this great God shall exhibit the infinite purity of his Law, and contrast it with the sinner's vileness,—then the poor wretch, if he have no Savior to plead for him, must feel that he is indeed undone for ever—that it is utterly impossible to stand such a trial. But,

4. The impenitent sinner at God's bar WILL HAVE NO ADVOCATE. At a human tribunal, when the culprit is arraigned, though his case appear exceedingly bad—though all the witnesses be against him, and the Judge inflexibly strict—still he sometimes cherishes hope, from the ingenuity and eloquence of his advocate. But for the impenitent at Jehovah's bar no advocate will be found. Not one of his boldest companions in sin will venture a syllable in his defence; not one of those foul spirits of darkness who may have seduced him with lies, will now *care* for his safety; not one of the bright and generous millions who encircle the throne will *have a heart* to palliate his guilt. And having slighted the mediation of Christ, he can have no part in *his* mercy. Every impenitent sinner, therefore, on that day must bear his own burden. He must hear the condemning witnesses, the eternal law, the irreversible sentence, without any advocate whatever in his behalf. How then can he stand the trial?

5. *Finally*; to make his case perfectly hopeless, let it be remembered, that ALL WHO ARE TO CO-OPERATE IN HIS TRIAL, WILL BE HOLY AND UPRIGHT BEINGS. "Know ye not that the *saints* shall judge the world?" Yes, these happy spirits, themselves "washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb," and admitted to share his glory, will then look on the wicked who have despised his mercy, just as they appear "in the light of God's countenance," amid the splendors of the "great white throne;" and in such circumstances they cannot but acquiesce in the sanctions of the infinitely holy law. Their part will then be, with Christ, to judge and condemn; and not as now, to entreat, and suffer wrong. Men of eminent piety and moral worth are sometimes most cruelly treated in this world. Wealth and power and intrigue may here succeed in a bad cause. Yes,

"In the corrupted currents of *this* world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law: but 'tis not so *above*:
There is no shuffling."

For Heaven has declared, of all the proud, of all the unjust, yea, of all that do wickedly, "Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them, and the upright *shall have dominion over them in the morning*." And again, "To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people, to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute upon them the judgment written, *this honor have all his saints*."

If then wicked kings and nobles shall fall under the condemnation of the saints, when with Christ they shall judge the world, where is the impenitent man that can stand the trial?

O sinner! when all the witnesses shall be against you; when your Judge shall be inflexibly strict; and no kind advocate shall appear for you; and all the jurors shall be perfectly holy: can thy heart endure, or thy hands be strong, when God shall deal with thee? Ah, no! Every angel of light would say, *No*; every man in his right mind must say, *No*: this controversy is with *Omnipotence*, and God is right and you are wrong, and there is no possibility of standing, when "the great day of his wrath is come."

What then is the grand inference from this subject? Why, every man in his right mind must say—what the Savior himself hath kindly and earnestly said—"Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him."

Hearken, then, sinner, to the advice of infinite wisdom. Settle at once this awful controversy. Have the courage, have the honesty, have the magnanimity to confess before men and angels, that God is right and that you are wrong. Fly to the only Savior, to the all-prevailing Intercessor. Accept his offered mediation, and be at peace. For it is madness, inexpressible madness, as well as guilt, to remain unreconciled to God, and brave the eternal judgment, without an advocate, without one favoring witness, with no friend on the throne, nor one pitying saint or angel among all the millions who attend the trial.

As a rational being, you know that in such circumstances you must inevitably fall. "*The ungodly shall not stand.*" And recollect, from that fall there is no recovery. It settles your destiny forever, *forever, FOREVER*. Then "he that is unjust let him be unjust still." And Oh! eternity, eternity, eternity! how long and dreary must be the period, spent in "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," under a full conviction of deserved wrath! Think, O my soul, think before it be too late, what it is to be abandoned by the infinite Redeemer and Judge, and lie forever under the "power of his anger!" Think of the dread amount of misery that must be endured by an incorrigible enemy of God, *increasing forever in guilt and remorse!* Think of the extent of eternity! Oh! send an angel forward on the awful deep, with the speed of lightning, for millions on millions of centuries, and the dread waves of perdition are still rising and rolling eternally beyond!

Fellow sinner, in view of these considerations, what will you now do? "The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished." "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself, but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it." "Be wise now therefore. Be instructed. Serve the Lord with fear. Rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and thou perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." For "*who can stand before his indignation, and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?*"

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